



# NUNTIVS CALFORNIENSIS

The Official Publication of the California Junior Classical League

## Convention Stories

*Zahra Hasanain, Nuntius Editor*

There isn't a whole lot that's more entertaining, exciting, or intriguing than listening to JCL sponsors tell their favorite stories from past conventions. But travelling back into JCL history and gaining a new perspective often takes more time than a class period allows. Fortunately, even as time slips away, the greatest stories stay. Here are some of the best memories from JCL conventions that sponsors have to share:

### A Tale of Perseverance

"I started Latin as a junior at Middletown High School. We didn't have a very active JCL chapter, but that year we persuaded our teacher to take us to Connecticut State Latin Day. We made a set of tunics stenciled with the school mascot (Blue Dragons) and even built a chariot. The chariot wouldn't fit on the bus, so it was lashed securely to the roof of the car of the main engineer. He drove a Volkswagen bug.

Although the base of the chariot was made of wood, the walls were cardboard. I'm not sure how that would have been safe for the charioteer, but it turned out to be a moot point; rain poured down as we traveled to the event, and our chariot was a soggy mess. I still wear the peplos I made to enter the costume contest as Atalanta that year"

— Lisa Masoni, Harker Middle School Sponsor

*(continued on pg. 3)*

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**"I still wear the peplos I made to enter the costume contest as Atalanta that year"**

## Top 5 Events to Attend at National Convention

*Margot Armbruster, Wisconsin JCL Editor*

National convention is a whirlwind of activity, a week which can seem twice as long as it actually is due to the number of events to attend and places to be. Especially if you're a first-time nationals attendee, it can be a little overwhelming to decide how to spend your time. So I've compiled a list of some of the most interesting events at nationals in the hopes of making life a little easier for any JCL newbies reading this.

### 5. Candidates' Open Forum

If you're interested in learning more about JCL elections, you should attend Open Forum. It's a question-and-answer session where candidates respond to both serious and humorous queries so that the JCL can get to know them and their campaign goals better. There's typically also time for questions from the floor at the end, so if you have a burning question for a particular candidate, this could be your chance to ask it. Additionally, 10% of the delegates from each state are required to attend Open Forum in order for the state to retain both its votes, so by attending, you not only get a closer view into the election process, but you also help ensure that your state keeps all its votes.

### 4. Creative Arts Contests

There's a creative arts contest for everybody. From sight Latin reading, to acting out scenes in Latin, to giving a speech in English, (*continued on pg. 4*)

## SCL Update

*Sydney Higa, CSCL President*

Hey there, CAJCL! We last saw you all at State Convention in April and we had such a blast running Olympika and That's Entertainment. Thank you to all the amazing athletes and performers who participated and embraced the JCL spirit. This is why we come back every year - to help give back to the community that gave us so much.



*SCLers before That's Entertainment*

Post-State Convention, our members are gearing up to attend the NJCL Convention at Troy University in Alabama and are preparing for the next academic year. We welcome all graduating high school seniors to join our ranks. SCL membership does not just let you attend regional and state conventions free of charge, but also gives you the chance to meet other Classicists at your institution. Aside from SCL activities at conventions, we typically host a reunion or two sometime throughout the year.

Registering as an SCLer is super easy even if you will be attending college outside of California. For information on how to sign-up feel free to email us ([scl@cajcl.org](mailto:scl@cajcl.org)) or send a message on Facebook (California Senior Classical League). We cannot wait to see you all again next year!

## Convention Stories

*(continued from pg. 1)*

### Certamen, Carmina etc.

“How do I choose just one favorite memory from a past JCL Convention? This year’s Convention marked my 19<sup>th</sup>... that’s a lot of memories to consider. Instead of just one memory, many come to mind. Convention 2005 is a highlight. For the 50<sup>th</sup> Annual State Convention we went to University High School in Irvine. The banquet was at Knott’s Berry Farm (super fun!), I rode the chariot (we won), and we took 2<sup>nd</sup> place in spirit. Too bad we lost the prize – a giant Frisbee – on our way back home to San Francisco! Our HS-1 Certamen team worked really hard to earn a place in the finals. After they won the competition by only five points, the team of four freshmen swarmed their coaches. It was an adorable scene. *(continued on pg. 7)*



2005 HS-1 Certamen Champions from St. Ignatius College Preparatory

## Paranoia: A Poem

*Joshua Zou, University High School*

**I**t starts with a pause when they’re talking.

Small enough to be a mistake,  
to be the momentary turbulence of awkwardness,  
an eddy in the Acheron of life.  
But it’s not a real pause is it? It’s not a real one, no.  
One birthed inside your own mind, feeding you lies.  
Maybe you didn’t believe them  
at first, but sooner or later, one of them  
hit something, something soft, reminding you of  
all the times when you felt the most ... alone.

παράνοια

The Ancient Greek Word “paranoia,”  
meaning “madness”

And so you believed it didn’t you?  
Because Oedipus could solve all the problems  
that weren’t of his own making.  
And when the pause became a voice, you still believed it,  
didn’t you?  
Even when you knew it was lying.  
You devour the pause, the lie, all of it. You gluttonously  
digest the “fact”  
that proves your insecurities right:  
that no one wants you around,  
that people see you the way you see yourself.  
You lose yourself to the lie,  
You find somewhere else to be *(continued on pg. 6)*



## Top 5 Events to Attend at National Convention *(continued from pg. 2)*

creative arts contests provide a great opportunity to show off your dramatic chops, as well as test your ability to interpret Latin. It's also easy to make friends at creative arts events, since everyone is waiting in the same room before their performance and most people will be eager to chat to make the waiting period seem shorter.

### 3. Ludi

I'm from Wisconsin, so I may be biased, but I think playing Ludi is a great idea. You can bond with people both from your own state and from others, all while quenching your need for competition and getting some exercise. Even if you're not on the state team for a particular sport, it's still fun to attend and cheer your friends on.

### 2. Certamen

Certamen is as close to the pinnacle of our collective Latin nerdiness as you can get. Whether you're on a competitive team, play Wild Card or Open Certamen, or just want to watch and support your state's team, expect a wild ride. A typical round is filled with crazy hyperbuzzes, impressive displays of knowledge, and suspense, and it showcases the hundreds of hours of work players put into the game each year.

### 1. Spirit

Luckily, you won't be missing the number one most interesting event at national convention! Spirit is an incredible, loud, fun-filled experience where each state's creativity and hard work is evident through their costumes and props, *(continued on pg. 8)*

## Cleopatra's True Race

*Zahra Hasanain, Nuntius Editor*

**W**as Cleopatra white? Was she black? Was she mixed-race? How does our modern conception of race compare with that of the Classical World? Does knowing Cleopatra's true race even matter? More than 2,000 years after Cleopatra's death, the answers to these questions remain ambiguous.

On the white side, many point to the fact that the Ptolemaic dynasty, from which Cleopatra hails, has Macedonian beginnings. On the black side, emphasis is placed on the supposed Black African origins of Ancient Egyptians, from whom many commoners of Egypt during Cleopatra's time were descended. Cleopatra's true racial makeup lies confusingly between these two viewpoints.



**Two dissimilar busts of Cleopatra**

**Source: Wikimedia Commons**

Scholars all agree that Cleopatra's father was pure Macedonian, a direct heir *(continued on pg. 9)*

## Poems on Classical Themes

*Kiana Hu, Miramonte High School*

The following poems are all inspired by my observations about the characters and themes in different myths:

### *Philomela and Procne—a Nightingale's Song*

Run away from your fears  
They'll never catch up to you  
Until you falter  
But you'll never stop— will you?  
Yet the images haunt you  
Taunts, torments, no better than a  
childish quarrel  
Stay for the fun  
won't you remember?  
Silence your emotions  
Shove them away, throw them far  
Don't let them overpower you  
Why would you hurt those who love you?  
Yet you lost your voice  
Powerless lacking the greatest gift of all  
Your misery speaks but in incomprehensible mumbling  
Did the cat bite your tongue?  
Tell the one who must know  
They'll understand, they'll listen  
Valued intimacy was never theirs to take  
You're not to blame  
Are you?  
Yet you're the nightingale  
The one who cannot sing  
Revenge best served on a cold dish  
But did they finally  
Learn? *(continued on pg. 8)*



**Philomela and Procne**  
Source: [cornellcollege.edu](http://cornellcollege.edu)

## Top 5 Events to Attend at National Convention

*(continued from pg. 4)*

and where their desire for glory is just as evident as delegates fill the auditorium with noise. The tradition of spirit is unique to JCL, so enjoy yourself while it happens, since nationals only comes once a year!

I hope all of you are able to take advantage of at least some of the activities on this list—nationals only gets better the more involved you are in the various events and contests taking place all week. See you at Troy in July, but until then, have a great summer!

### Quote Corner!

*Feel like you're losing momentum as the school year comes to a close? Sick of constantly making mistakes? Wondering why you always feel like taking a nap? Don't worry! According to Horace, those feelings aren't so harmful or unnatural, because "Quandoque bonus dormitat Homerus." Even good Homer sleeps. Instead of chiding yourself for every misstep, remember that even the greatest models of human excellence were not immune to error or tiredness. Failure and rest are both necessary for individual growth.*

## Paranoia *(continued from pg. 3)*

You flee every scene  
 on a vehicle fueled by thinly disguised self-loathing  
 until you find shelter:  
 until you find yourself in a labyrinth of glass,  
 woven from your impenetrable fear of being alone,  
 Alone.  
 Because one day, the voice told you “Why bother?”  
 and you believed it, because you believed all of it,  
 and because you thought a life lost in Asphodel  
 would be better than a life in Tartarus  
 Because choosing to be alone is better than being left  
 alone.  
 Because fear was stronger than love and light and joy.  
 And now you’re here. Alone.  
 Do you hear it? Outside?  
 There are people calling your name,  
 and only now does it hit you  
 that for every lie there’s a believer.  
 You weren’t alone, but now you are.  
 You’ve built this castle too high to go back down now.  
 You’re alone.



**Ancient Garum Jars**

*Note from the Poet: I know this might seem dark, and maybe it doesn’t ring with many of you, but if there are any of you who are struggling through these feelings like I am, I want you to know that the future isn’t dark at all, that you’re not alone, and most of all don’t give in. Hint: The poem is written through the voice of The Voice, and it isn’t done lying.*

## What’s for Dinner?— Roman Edition

*Cybele Zhang, Archer School for Girls*

When most people think of food and Rome, what logically comes to mind is probably pizza, pasta or gelato—but ancient Roman food was pretty different than modern Italian fare. Here are a few of the wildest dishes that ancient Romans enjoyed:

### 1. Flamingo

Like chicken, but larger? This delicacy was quite the treat for Romans. The birds were expensive, so only wealthy families could afford to serve the dish. For extra excitement, the tongue was believed to be especially tasty. Wealthy Romans also enjoyed exotic birds such as peacocks, parrots and ostriches.

### 2. Garum

Everyone enjoys their favorite condiment! Modern Americans would choose ketchup, mustard, or relish, but chances are that a Roman would have preferred garum, a popular fermented sauce made of fish intestines, blood, and spices. Pliny the Elder described the sauce as “prepared from the intestines of fish and various parts which would otherwise be thrown away, macerated in salt; so that it is, in fact, the result of their putrefaction.” Another similar sauce was *liquamen*, also made of fish. These sauces were rarely made in Rome, but rather were imported from Spain and North Africa in *amphorae*.

*(continued on pg. 10)*



## Convention Stories

(continued from pg. 3)

The UHS JCL also put on the first ever Battle of the Bands. A trio of my students entered the competition as the Pontius Co-Pilots. During the Friday night auditions, they whipped the crowd into a frenzy with their covers of Disney tunes and “That Thing You Do”, and with the original song “Sophomore”, written by their lead singer. The winners were determined by acclamation, and the Pontius Co-Pilots won easily. The next day, the Pontius Co-Pilots had the honor of performing a concert during lunch. I watched students from other schools screaming for this band. Oh—small detail—the lead singer was **Darren Criss**. Yes, the same Darren Criss who has starred in *Glee*, and *Hedwig and the Angry Inch*, to name a few, was a JCLer.

Convention 2005 was amazing, but I think my greatest memory would have to be Convention 2017. After all, SI JCL threw that party. It was great fun to work with my students to prepare for this event. Carina Leung was a fantastic leader, both in the planning stages and on stage. My favorite part of Convention ’17 was watching my students team up, work hard, and take full ownership of every event. I’ll never forget this wonderful team”

— Grace Curcio, St Ignatius College Preparatory Sponsor

### From Passionate JCLer to Passionate Sponsor

“My former student, Derek Wilairat, is now a magister optimus at Harvard Westlake School. Circa 1995 when he was a sixth grader at Bentley School, he won best overall at State Convention. Every year he stunned the competition in all categories. One convention that I particularly remember him in was when he was the solo member of a Level III Certamen team. He was amazing and, with a listing of the Five Good Emperors, he won the event handily. I remember one stunned member of the audience scratch his head while saying, “Who WAS that?”

**Darren Criss!**



**“I watched students from other schools screaming for this band. Oh—small detail—the lead singer was Darren Criss.”**



**“My former student, Derek Wilairat, is now a magister optimus at Harvard-Westlake School”**

## Poems on Classical Themes

*(continued from pg. 5)*

### Ceyx and Alcyone— a Wife's Pleas

sorrows in parting for eternity  
 beautiful bonds unbroken by vows  
 imploring pleas again call out  
 turning with a downcast glance  
 solemnly returns home  
 a stormy voyage  
 Misfortunate, wretched souls  
 thrown to  
 waves  
 dreams  
 they sent  
 visages  
 almost nightmares  
 breaks the tragic news  
 mournful cries tormenting  
 shattered perfect promises  
 they cannot stand the misery  
 silent duet into kingfishers  
 always together for eternity



**“Imploring pleas again call out turning  
 with a downcast glance”**

**Source: Wikimedia Commons**

### Hyacinthus and Pallas— A Friend's Mistake

captivating youth  
 Apollo's dear companion  
 fatal blowing wind  
 energetic youth  
 Athena's most trusted friend  
 fatal throwing play  
 death by javelin  
 death by a spear thrown off course  
 Tragic death



**“The Death of Hyacinthus”  
 by Giovanni Tiepolo**

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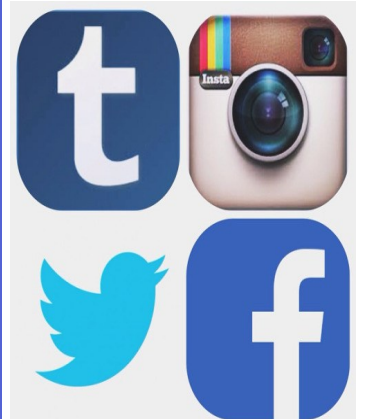
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## Cleopatra's True Race

*(continued from pg. 3)*

of the Ptolemaic line. The controversy arises from the unknown identity of Cleopatra's mother. Most believe that she must have been Cleopatra V, a Ptolemaic queen, yet others suspect that she must have been a concubine who could've easily been Black-African. After all, it was customary for Ptolemaic kings to take many concubines, and this is a plausible explanation as to why Cleopatra's mother is considered irrelevant and never mentioned in ancient texts. But if Cleopatra was an illegitimate child, why didn't ancient historians use this fact to smear her image more? Archaeologists have also found a skull that might belong to Cleopatra's sister, Arsinoe, and using measurements of the skull (which has since been lost) from the 1920s, they determined that it comes from someone of mixed Egyptian, Greek, and Black-African ancestry. Yet, Arsinoe could've likely had a different mother than Cleopatra. So all in all, at most, Cleopatra was *possibly* half Egyptian, and not 100% Greek.

Still, conflict boils over what race the Ancient Egyptians were, and saying that Cleopatra was half Ancient Egyptian doesn't account for her race—it only accounts for her ethnicity and nationality. This is because race, as we see it, was a concept that was mostly unheard of in antiquity. Superiority was measured on where you came from, not necessarily on the color of your skin. For example, the ancient Romans attributed their assumed exceptionalism to their ancestors and to their own fortitude, not to their white skin or European roots. Correspondingly, viewing Cleopatra literally or figuratively through a black or white lens fails to take into account the nuances of how race relations have changed over time. *(continued on pg. 10)*

## Parliamentarian Update

*Neah Lekan, Parliamentarian*

**S**alvete Amici! My name is Neah Lekan and I have the honor of serving as your CJCL Parliamentarian next year. My convention experience featured the odd combination of nervous energy and pure excitement that running for office entails, along with a lot of fun cheering and competing along the way. I would recommend the experience of running for state office to everyone. It's not only a fun process that will give you the most exciting weekend of your life, it's a truly transformative experience that will help you grow as a JCLer and a person. If you're at all interested in running, there will be Election Workshops at SCRAM and Ludi in the fall, where you can ask other officers questions and learn more about the process. In the meantime, send me an email at [parliamentarian@cajcl.org](mailto:parliamentarian@cajcl.org) if you have any questions. Multas Gratias!



**Board Candidates at 2017 State Convention**

## What's for Dinner? —Roman Edition *(continued from pg. 6)*

### 3. Dormice

Most Americans see rodents as more foe than food, but things were a little different in Ancient Rome. Dormice were commonly served for dinner; the fatter the mouse the wealthier the host. The mice were usually stuffed with meat, nuts, or peppers, then dipped into honey.

### 4. Sorbet

Need something to cool down on a hot day? Well Romans did too, but they did not have the convenience of simply opening a refrigerator for a cool treat. According to historian Suetonius, the emperor Nero was accustomed to sending slaves to the mountains to retrieve snow. That ice was then combined with juices and fruits to create a sorbet-like treat. Because of the great difficulty involved in making the treat, only wealthy people had the means to enjoy it.

### 5. Lamb Brains

Apicius famously wrote one of the earliest surviving cookbooks entitled *De Re Coquinaria*. In it, he raved about lamb brains, including a recipe for them cooked with eggs, peppers, and rose petals. He also describes a jelly made of lamb sweetbreads, raisins, and moldy bread. Yikes!

Hungry yet? If you want to know more about Roman food check out some modern cookbooks that tell you how to reproduce these ancient classics and many other dishes!



**“Nero was accustomed to sending slaves to the mountains to retrieve snow. That ice was then combined with juices and fruits to create a sorbet-like treat”**

### Quote Corner!

*Looking for something to do during the summertime? Now that the sun is shining, try exploring nature and searching for some of its hidden gems. Perhaps they won't be as overtly beautiful as a blood red rose, but as Ovid observes, “Saepe creat molles aspera spina rosas.” Often the prickly thorn produces tender roses. The greatest beauty comes from the most unexpected places, so don't expect an easy search. But don't be discouraged either—The pursuit is what makes such rare beauty all the more special.*

## Cleopatra's True Race

(continued from pg. 9)

It's baffling to think of a world where skin color doesn't matter much. In fact, it's a topic rarely mentioned in Roman texts. To the Romans, Cleopatra was an evil foreign seductress, entrancing Caesar and Antony under her spell, distracting them from their imperial duties. Yet, it's strange that they never once described her beauty in terms of her skin tone, instead choosing to describe, in Plutarch's words, her "tongue, like an instrument of many strings, she could readily turn to whatever language she pleased" or her "being brilliant to look upon and to listen to, with the power to subjugate everyone," in the words of Cassius Dio. Perhaps people throughout history, from Renaissance painters to Hollywood moguls, read these descriptions and immediately assumed that such beauty could only belong to a white woman. And it's very possible that they weren't wrong in their assumptions specifically about Cleopatra. However, instead of focusing on the complicated question of Cleopatra's race, it may be more important and more successful to try to dispel rumors that shroud her exaggerated persona. We may have a different understanding of race nowadays, but we also (hopefully) have a better understanding of truth, and Cleopatra's legacy depends less on the determination of her race than on the revealing of her authentic legacy.



Cleopatra has historically been portrayed as a white woman in movies, paintings, and other media

## Editor's Farewell

Thank you all so much for your for reading the *Nuntius* this past year. Being your editor has truly been an honor. Somewhere between all the editing and formatting, I realized the tremendous creativity, passion, and love that drives the JCL. I published pieces this year with topics ranging from the connection between Twitter and Classics to a fictionalized version of Cicero's letters to Atticus. Every JCLer, SCLer, and sponsor who contributed to the *Nuntius* brought unique ideas and helped forge an invaluable connection with local and nationwide JCL chapters. Aside from providing important information about upcoming and past JCL events, I sincerely hope that this publication has been a source for joy and curiosity for everyone. To all who have made this publication possible, I extend my eternal gratitude. Avete atque Valet, Zahra Hasanain

Wanna look back at old issues of the *Nuntius* you may have missed?

Just click this link:

<http://www.cajcl.org/downloads/nuntius.html>